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Paid URL Inclusion
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There are many ways to promote your website and one of the most efficient ways is to use search engines. Search engines are the first stop for most people trying to find information, services, and products online. Because of this, it is essential that your website appears quickly in search results.

The Internet contains numerous search engines, some of which offer what is known as "paid inclusion." This means that you pay the specific search engine an annual fee for your web page to be included in their index.

Of course, every search engine already has an automated program commonly called a "spider" that indexes all the web pages it locates online, and it does this for free. So whether you pay or not, your web page will eventually be indexed by all Internet search engines, as long as the spider can follow a link to your page. The major issue is, then, how quickly your page is indexed.

A search engine that offers a paid URL inclusion uses an extra spider that is programmed to index the particular pages that have been paid for. The difference between the spider that indexes pages for free and the spider that indexes only pages for a fee is speed. If you have paid for inclusion, the additional search engine spider will index your page immediately.

The debate over paid URL inclusion centers around the annual fee. Since the regular spider of these search engines would eventually get around to indexing your web page anyway, why is a renewal fee necessary? The fee is necessary to keep your pages in the search engine's index. If you go the route of paid inclusion, you should be aware that at the end of the pay period, on some search engines, your page will be removed from their index for a certain amount of time.

It's easy to get confused about whether you would benefit from paid inclusion since the spider of any search engine will eventually index your page without the additional cost. There are both advantages and disadvantages to paid URL inclusion, and it is only by weighing your pros and cons that you will be able to decide whether to spring for the extra cash or not.

The advantages are obvious: rapid inclusion and rapid re-indexing. Paid inclusion means that your pages will be indexed quickly and added to search results in a very short time after you have paid the fee. The time difference between when the regular spider will index your pages and when the paid spider will is a matter of months. The spider for paid inclusion usually indexes your pages in a day or

two. Be aware that if you have no incoming links to your pages, the regular spider will never locate them at all.

Additionally, paid inclusion spiders will go back to your pages often, sometimes even daily. The advantage of this is that you can update your pages constantly to improve the ranking in which they appear in search engines, and the paid URL inclusion spider will show that result in a matter of days.

First and foremost, the disadvantage is the cost. For a ten page website, the costs of paid URL inclusion range from $170 for Fast/Lycos to $600 for Altavista, and you have to pay each engine their annual fee. How relevant the cost factor is will depend on your company.

Another, and perhaps more important, disadvantage is the limited reach of paid URL inclusions. The largest search engines, Google, Yahoo, and AOL, do not offer paid URL inclusion. That means that the search engines you choose to pay an inclusion fee will amount to a small fraction of the traffic to your site on a daily basis.

Google usually updates its index every month, and there is no way you can speed up this process. You will have to wait for the Google spider to index your new pages no matter how many other search engines you have paid to update their index daily. Be aware that it is only after Google updates their index that your pages will show up in Google, Yahoo, or AOL results.

One way to figure out whether paid URL inclusion is a good deal for your company is to consider some common factors. First, find out if search engines have already indexed your pages. To do this, you may have to enter a number of different keywords, but the quickest way to find out is to enter your URL address in quotes. If your pages appear when you enter the URL address but do not appear when you enter keywords, using paid inclusion will not be beneficial. This is because your pages have already been indexed and ranked by the regular spider. If this is the case, your money would be better spent by updating your pages to improve your ranking in search results. Once you accomplish this, you can then consider using paid inclusion if you want to speed up the time it will take for the regular spider to revisit your pages.

The most important factor in deciding whether to use paid URL inclusion is to decide if it's a good investment. To figure this out, you have to look at the overall picture: what kind of product or service are you selling and how much traffic are you dependent on to see a profit?

If your company sells an inexpensive product that requires a large volume of traffic to your site, paid inclusion may not be the best investment for you; the biggest search engines do not offer it, and they are the engines that will

bring you the majority of hits. On the other hand, if you have a business that offers an expensive service or product and requires a certain quality of traffic to your site, a paid URL inclusion is most likely an excellent investment.

Another factor is whether or not your pages are updated frequently. If the content changes on a daily or weekly basis, paid inclusion will insure that your new pages are indexed often and quickly. The new content is indexed by the paid spider and then appears when new relevant keywords are entered in the search engines. Using paid inclusion in this case will guarantee that your pages are being indexed in a timely manner.

You should also base your decision on whether or not your pages are dynamically generated. These types of pages are often difficult for regular spiders to locate and index. Paying to include the most important pages of a dynamically generated website will insure that the paid spider will index them.

Sometimes a regular spider will drop pages from its search engine, although these pages usually reappear in a few months. There are a number of reasons why this can happen, but by using paid URL inclusion, you will avoid the possibility. Paid URL inclusion guarantees that your pages are indexed, and if they are inadvertently dropped, the search engine will be on the lookout to locate them immediately.

As you can see, there are numerous factors to consider when it comes to paid URL inclusion. It can be a valuable investment depending on your situation. Evaluate your business needs and your website to determine if paid URL inclusion is a wise investment for your business goals.